



Indiana Department of Education

SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS

MEMORANDUM

TO: Superintendents and Principals

FROM: Cathy Danyluk
Chief State Attendance Officer

DATE: July 29, 2010

SUBJECT: Transfer Tuition FAQ's

In response to numerous questions from the field, the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) compiled this document on transfer tuition. Should you have any additional questions, please contact Cathy Danyluk at 317-232-9150.

1. Does Indiana have Open Enrollment?

Not exactly. School corporations are not generally obligated to accept students unless they have legal settlement in the school district. IC 20-26-11-6(b) was amended effective July 1, 2010 to allow school corporations to elect whether to accept cash transfer students. Therefore, policies vary by school district as to whether cash transfer students will be accepted. Open enrollment only exists to the extent that a school district is willing to accept cash transfer students from outside the district and parents are willing to adhere to the terms of the accepting school corporations' cash transfer tuition policy.

2. What if a student wants to transfer out of his or her current school district into a neighboring one?

School corporations still have the authority to adopt policies concerning admission of cash transfer students who do not have legal settlement in the corporation. Parents have the choice to move their child to another school corporation as long as they are willing to abide by the cash transfer policies of the accepting school district.

In the past, parents paid transfer tuition in an amount that equaled the share of the general fund's per-pupil cost of education supported by local property taxes. On January 1, 2009, the state assumed responsibility for supporting the school general fund. With state tuition support funding almost fully supporting the school general fund, there should be minimal, if any, transfer tuition paid by the parents for students who transfer prior to the September ADM count day.

For cash transfer students transferring after the September ADM count day, tuition costs may increase substantially to offset the loss of state tuition support received by the school district.

3. Under what circumstances can a parent transfer their student?

Students have two means to secure transfers:

(1) Better Accommodated Transfers/Request of Parents or Students (IC 20-26-11-5) – This transfer is tied to better accommodations. Better accommodations depends on matters such as crowded conditions of the transferee or transferor school corporation or curriculum offerings at the high school level that are important to the vocational or academic aspirations of the student. If the parent presents evidence that meets the requirements of the law, the school corporation of residence (transferor school corporation) includes the student in its ADM count and pays the full tuition amount to the transferee school. See http://www.doe.in.gov/legal/docs/transfer_tuition.pdf.

(2) Cash Transfer – A school corporation may accept a transferring student upon request by a parent and without approval of the transferor corporation. (IC 20-26-11-6). The corporation may agree to accept the student but is not obligated to do so. The parent agrees to pay transfer tuition if required by the school corporation. If the transfer occurs before the September count date, state money follows the student, and the parent pays the difference between the cost of education and the state support. Essentially, this difference equals the local share of the cost of education. If the school corporation chooses to charge the parents of a transfer student, the cost should be minimal after the first semester of enrollment. If the transfer occurs after the September count date, cash transfer tuition could increase substantially. School corporations should provide parents an estimated transfer tuition bill as calculated using State Board of Accounts Transfer Tuition Statement (Form 515, Revised 2009 – found under Exhibit U in the Appendix).

4. What will parents have to pay to transfer their student?

The Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) cannot give precise amounts for transfer tuition because the funding for each school corporation is unique. The amount of transfer tuition is calculated by the school district using Form 515 mentioned above.

If there is a cost associated with a transfer, the school corporation accepting the student is obligated to use the statutory formula, which is based on the cost of education.

5. What if a school does not have transfer tuition? Is that legal?

Yes. In the 2010 legislative session, the Indiana General Assembly began allowing school corporations to accept transfer students without requiring tuition. They may charge transfer tuition but are not obligated to do so. (Go to www.in.gov/legislative/ic/code/title20/ar26/ch11.html for a copy of the relevant statute.)

6. Who should parents contact if they have questions regarding a transfer?

Please contact Cathy Danyluk at cdanyluk@doe.in.gov or 317-232-9150 with general questions regarding transfer tuition. The IDOE cannot answer questions related to specific situations, because the IDOE has no regulatory authority in this area. The State Board of Education has the authority to resolve disputes concerning legal settlement, right to transfer, right to attend school in any school corporation, and any amount of transfer tuition charged. This authority is exercised only where a petition is filed in a timely manner by a party involved in an actual case or controversy.

7. If a student transfers, who is responsible for transportation to and from school?

If a parent chooses to transfer a student to another school corporation, the student's parents are responsible for providing transportation for their child.

8. Can a student transfer to another school district solely for the purpose of joining a better athletic program?

No. The Indiana High School Athletic Association (IHSAA) transfer rule states a student may be barred from participating in interschool athletics if the student transfers primarily for athletic reasons. If the IHSAA rules a student ineligible, the student may appeal to a Case Review Panel, which is administered by the IDOE.

9. What happens if a student is unhappy with his or her transfer and wants to return to the original corporation?

When a parent exercises an open enrollment opportunity, state support follows the student. The corporation of legal settlement remains responsible for providing an educational program, and the parent may return the student to the home corporation at any time.

These FAQ's are posted on the IDOE website at:

www.doe.in.gov/sservices/attendance/docs/TransferTuitionFAQ.pdf.